

CORRESPONDENCE

licensing boards in terms of their requirements. Perhaps new categories of medical licenses are needed to designate honorary status or limited practice.

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REFERENCES

1. Simpson IH, Back KW, McKinney JC: Social Aspects of Aging. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1966
2. Friedmann EA, Havighurst RJ: The Meaning of Work and Retirement. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1954
3. Rogers P: Why doctors seldom retire. Southwest Med 1970 Apr; 51: 82-83

Controversy Over February Symposium

TO THE EDITOR: I find it preposterous that a publication pretending to be a scientific journal would devote the first six articles of an issue¹ to political propaganda. You have been duped by the KGB—read the *Reader's Digest* article on the "peace" movement!

Please delete my name from your mailing list.

WALTER L. JOHNSON, MD
San Diego

REFERENCE

1. Medical Consequences of Nuclear War Symposium. West J Med Feb; 138:205-226.

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TO THE EDITOR: Thanks! Your editorial "The Absurdities of Collective Extinction" and the five articles on the medical consequences of nuclear war made me proud to be a member of the California Medical Association. This problem is overwhelming in its importance and insane in its continued escalation. I'm comforted that this symposium was published, taking the problem out of the "left wing," as "conservative" medicine helps to show it all is far beyond politics.

Thanks for your courage in printing this.

PAUL KAUFMANN, MD
San Francisco

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TO THE EDITOR: Henry Kissinger has severely criticized the tendency to treat foreign policy as a "subdivision of psychiatry." I was therefore dismayed to see that the extensive space given to discussion of "medical consequences of nuclear war" has now made the weighty problems of international relations a province of the field of preventive medicine as well. The implication of much of this writing is that physicians, because of their training (or perhaps because they wear white coats), have some sort of special sensitivity that political leaders and generals lack. To my way of thinking, this represents a combination of naivete and conceit. The papers represented essentially political opinions wrapped up in a scientific package; particularly bizarre were many of Dr Lipton's implications that fear of nuclear war is a cause of teenage mischief and drug abuse, among other things.

The Physicians for Social Responsibility is an essentially populist organization that perceives *all* governments as *equally* objectionable, all unresponsive to the yearning of "decent people." Perhaps so as not to take sides, this organization has not spoken out against consistent violations by the Soviet Union of arms control agreements, particularly with respect to the use of chemical-biological agents. Will there be a symposium on the horribly debilitating effects of biological warfare in the near future? Will there be a symposium on how an attempt to establish a peace movement in the Soviet Union independent of the government was squashed by putting the movement's founder in a KGB-controlled psychiatric hospital?

JOHN HOCHMAN, MD
Encino, California

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TO THE EDITOR: Great praise and thanks are due to the editors of the journal for publishing the symposium on the medical consequences of nuclear war in the February 1983 issue. It is a sign of encouragement, and also of the danger of our times, that the physicians' anti-nuclear movement has grown from ten MDs in New York and Boston to tens of thousands around the world in only four years. I am pleased to see THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE joining other prestigious medical journals in presenting this overridingly important formation to the members of our profession.

Equally important as our task, for me at least, has been the unique opportunity to meet so many caring, sensitive and concerned colleagues from all specialties joining together to prevent the unprecedented epidemic of death that nuclear war would loose upon the world. I expect that some of the authors who were part of the journal's symposium will be life-long friends. And I firmly believe that through the combined efforts of all of us, we and our children will indeed have long lives to enjoy.

JOHN M. GOLDENRING, MD, MPH
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Los Angeles

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TO THE EDITOR: Congratulations on your February 1983 issue in which you bring the medical consequences of nuclear war to the foreground. This topic has to receive top priority. Unless physicians stand together in combating what cannot be called anything but nuclear insanity, discussion of any or all other medical concerns will soon be rendered irrelevant.

HERBERT BAUER, MD
Davis, California

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TO THE EDITOR: Heartfelt thanks and congratulations on the *best issue ever* of *WJM* (February).

Maybe we can, with our world-wide colleagues, put an end to the military madness. Copies of this *WJM* should go to President Reagan and *all* members of Congress.

FREDERICK M. EPSTEIN, MD
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